



INTRODUCTION

Official NWBHA rules address the needs of NWBHA members, promote fairness, eliminate confusion, and assist show organizers in the production of an event that reflects our standards.

These Rules cannot cover all possible situations that may arise during a show, nor can they regulate all administrative questions. Where cases are not precisely regulated by a Rule, it should be possible to reach a reasonable decision by looking at the Rule Book and consulting your NWBHA Director.

The Rules assume NWBHA Directors and Race producers (Producers) have the necessary competence, sound judgment and absolute objectivity. Too detailed a rule might deprive the official of his/her freedom of judgment and thus prevent him/her from finding the solution to a problem dictated by fairness, logic, and special factors.

It is the responsibility of all contestants and members to read and understand the rules of NWBHA.

- SECTION A: Membership
- SECTION B: Competition Rules
- SECTION C: Show Sanctioning
- SECTION D: Earned Points
- SECTION E: Payout
- SECTION F: Rules Related to NWBHA Finals
- SECTION G: Penalties and/or Disqualifications
- SECTION H: Dress Code
- SECTION I: Protests & Complaints

Section A. Membership

Membership will be on an annual basis starting October 1 through September 30.

1. Competition classes:
 1. Open – open to any competitors
 2. Youth (17 years of age and under as of January 1 of the competition year)
 - a. At NWBHA Finals, Junior (13-17 years of age and under as of January 1 of the competition year) and Youth (12 and under as of January 1 of the competition year) – producers can choose to offer just one youth class for races throughout the year or split in the same way as finals
 3. Senior (45 years of age and over as of the date of the show)

4. Pee Wee (9 and under as of January 1 of the competition year) – does not require a membership; therefore, this age distinction is only relevant to NWBHA Finals. Producers may choose to have different ages for their races.

Section B. Competition Rules

1. An NWBHA barrel race is an electronically timed event using three identical barrels set in a cloverleaf pattern. Barrels must be metal or plastic, uniform in size and material, and must be enclosed on both ends.
2. The starting gate or gates must remain the same throughout the entire event. If more than one start gate is available, it must be offered or denied to all riders regardless of the direction they run.
3. The start/finish line and the barrel positions should be permanently marked and must remain the same throughout the entire event.
4. The pattern at an NWBHA show must meet the following conditions:
 - a. The first two barrels must be a minimum of 15 feet off the side fence
 - b. a minimum of 15 feet between the third barrel and the back fence.
 - c. a minimum of 30 feet between the timeline and the first barrel.
 - d. Stopping distance can be no less than 45 feet (from electric eye to fence).
 - e. These are all minimum requirements – patterns should be set within individual arena parameters and with the utmost safety in mind.
5. Ground Conditions:
 - a. The ground conditions within the arena must remain consistent throughout the event. The ground around the barrels must be reworked and leveled after no more than each 5 contestants have competed. Drag intervals must be consistent (Example: After every 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 riders.), throughout the event.
 - i. Producers may choose to run classes together if there are not enough in the class to fill a drag (Example: Run last two runners in the open and first 3 runners in the youth for a full drag). This should be done on a consistent basis for all classes throughout the race. Producer should announce and communicate if they will be running classes together.
 - b. The preferred method of working the ground is with a ground tool pulled by some type of motor vehicle. Hand raking is not acceptable.
6. Any time a contestant crosses the starting line, time will begin, and this will constitute an attempt at a run.
7. A contestant will be given a “no time” for any of the following reasons:
 - a. Off Pattern
 - b. Knocking over a barrel completely, regardless of if it stands back up on either end. Touching the barrel is permitted, without penalty.
 - c. Knocking down the timer at any time upon entering or exiting the competition arena, or during their run.
 - d. Running out of turn and/or riding a horse other than the horse in the drawn position. It is the contestant’s responsibility to know their drawn position. In the case where the announcer clearly announces the wrong running order and can identify their mistake, a contestant shall be offered a rerun. At the completion of the “out-of-order” run, the ground shall be drug for those riders remaining in the drag, if any.

- e. If the rider falls off after crossing the starting timer. A rider who falls off a horse completely, before the starting line, regardless of if the horse breaks the timer, a re-run will be offered in that moment in the same draw position, and not later.
- 8. Contestants may ride any horse or as many horses as they choose in a class. A rider cannot ride the same horse more than once in any class. In no case will the same horse be run more than twice in the same class.
- 9. Entries for a NWBHA class will close at the discretion of the Producer, unless otherwise stated on all District communications, advertising, and entry forms for the show.
- 10. Draws:
 - a. All draws shall be done in a random manner (computer, shuffling cards, drawing numbered chips, etc.). All horses in the draw must be named using registered names, when available. Riders with multiple entries must ride their horses in the position in which they are listed.
 - b. Producers may adjust individual draws to accommodate entries for the following reasons – all changes should be made on a consistent standard and should not create an unfair advantage or disadvantage to any competitor
 - i. Entries with the same horse or rider
 - ii. Entries involving members of the same immediate family
 - iii. Competitors schedules for other events or situations
 - iv. Running the race efficiently by filling open slots and/or moving competitors up in the draw (with competitors' knowledge)
- 11. Only one horse may be in the competition pattern at any time during competition.
- 12. Reruns shall be granted if the timer fails to work properly or if the barrels are not placed properly on their markers. Any penalty incurred on the original run shall not be applied against the rerun; however, any penalty occurring on the rerun shall result in a no time.
- 13. Contestants who are given a no-time, either for missing the pattern or knocking down a barrel, may complete the pattern. However, race producer may, at its discretion, ask a rider who is taking excessive time to train to leave the arena immediately.
- 14. Race producers have the right to disqualify contestants who do not cross the timer line within a reasonable amount of time from when the rider has been called. If contestant has not checked in at the office and/or paid fees, producer can treat them as a no-show.

Section C. Show Sanctioning

- 1. Sanctioning Process
 - a. If NWBHA is to co-sanction a race, the primary/prime sanction must be a legitimate membership organization with rules.
 - b. Producers should contact the district director for sanctioning of their event (contact regional directors if the event is not in an active district)
 - i. Events can be sanctioned as a district race or a regional race (either of these are considered qualifiers for NWBHA finals)
 - ii. The listing of current district directors and their contact information can be found at www.nwbha.org
 - c. Once approved for sanctioning, producers will submit race information via the producer portal on the website. Contact info@nwbha.org for login information if needed.

- d. Producers will upload results via the same portal on the website. They will also send the results via email along with a co-sanction report (if necessary) to Sue Ruzicka r4ranch2@gmail.com. This needs to be done within two weeks of the event.
 - e. Producers will mail fees (payable to the district) to the District Director
 - i. Prime sanction is \$1 per runner (open, youth and senior)
 - ii. Co-sanction is \$3 per runner who chooses to have that race count
 - 1. Districts can change this fee for district co-sanction races
 - 2. Fees are per race – for double headers, members must pay for each race
 - iii. Races outside of an active district that are co-sanctioned will mail fees (payable to NWBHA) to Lisa Lee, 18325 W Charles Rd, Nine Mile Falls WA 99026
 - f. A Producer Guide will be supplied as a tool for producers.
2. Multiple shows on a given date within a district may be sanctioned with District approval.
 - a. Directors must use good judgment in order not to create a travel distance hardship on members.
 3. Shows will be sanctioned on a first-come, first-serve basis. NWBHA reserves the right to refuse sanctioning for a particular date or show if it is determined not to be in the best interest of NWBHA or its members.
 4. Four classes of competition may be offered as follows (Proof of age may be required at the discretion of Race producer). Not all classes are required for a show to be sanctioned
 - a. *Open*
 - b. *Peewee* (Producer has discretion on age for Peewee, for NWBHA Finals, it is 9 and under as of January 1 of the competition year)
 - c. *Youth* (17 years of age and under as of January 1 of the competition year)
 - i. At Finals, Junior (13-17 years of age and under as of January 1 of the competition year) and Youth (12 and under as of January 1 of the competition year)
 - d. *Senior* (45 years of age and over as of the date of the show)
 - e. Producers may also offer non-NWBHA classes
 - f. Producer may allow eligible contestants to rollover/carryover their time between classes they are entered. Contestants must declare their intent to roll their times before they complete their first run. Contestants must pay the applicable entry fees for both classes and is eligible to win prize money and points just as if the time was run in the other class. The pattern for all classes allowing rollover must be the same and must not be changed in any manner. Groundwork must also be the same for all classes allowing the rollover. The order of the roll must be made on a consistent basis throughout the race and must be declared by the producer prior to race time and dependent on the order of the classes (Example: if the open runs first, all contestants run in the open and roll to their other eligible classes; if youth or senior classes run first, the eligible contestants would run in those classes and roll to the open).
 - i. If there are other Non-NWBHA classes, such as a Slot race, Futurity, Maturity, etc. – producers may allow competitors to roll their times into other classes they are eligible for as well.

- ii. NWBHA points, and payout, if any, will be determined based only on those riders who qualify for that particular class.
5. All sanctioned shows must have an electronic timing system and conform to NWBHA rules. (Note: NWBHA events will be timed to thousandths of seconds.)

Section D. Earned Points

1. Points are not given on a regional level. Each district has autonomous discretion on if and how they manage year-end points and awards.
 - a. District members nominating for district awards must be a current NWBHA member

Section E. Payout

1. Producers may use the payout calculator from any divisional organization of their choice.
2. Sanctioned shows may pay out on any divisional format.
3. A minimum of 70% of all entry fees must go to the jackpot. Producers keep the remaining 30% as their fee. This is exclusive of other fees which may be charged for specific purposes such as District Awards Fees, timer fee, processing fee or arena fee. While we permit such charges, they must not be excessive, must be clearly stated in all advertising, and must be directed to the specific purposes as labeled.
4. Added money will be divided in the same ratio used in the payout calculator for the entry fees or split evenly among all divisions
5. All added money must be paid out.
6. The last spot on the payoff of the last Division should pay back no less than the amount of the entry fee. If less than 10 riders are entered in race payoff can be less than the entry fee. Maximum number of places paid should be used when figuring the payoff.
7. There are no restrictions regarding how added money is apportioned among classes at a show. For example, a show may add money to the Open but not to Youth or Seniors.
8. At any NWBHA show, if not enough riders qualify in a division as monies to be paid, the money which is unaccounted for shall be paid at producer discretion among those who have placed in that division or based upon the percentages of the payout calculator until no leftover money remains. If no riders qualify in a division, the prize money for that division shall be equally divided among those riders in the other divisions of that class who have won prize money.

Section F: Rules Related to Finals and Qualification

All rulings made in accordance with the rule book and for instances not referenced in the rule book, will be made by the Show Manager, and will be considered final.

1. Finals
 - a. All NWBHA rules will apply as set forth in the rulebook if not addressed below.
 - b. All participants in Finals must be current members in good standings at the time of show.
 - c. To be eligible to enter NWBHA Finals all participants must have competed and/or entered with payment in three NWBHA sanctioned shows during the qualifying year.
 - i. Members do not have to qualify at races within their stated district – any sanctioned race will count as a qualifier.

- ii. Buy-in options will be determined on an annual basis. We prefer our members join and attend the races to qualify, however, we recognize there may be a need for a buy-in option.
 - 1. Half of the buy-in option fees are given back to the district of the members who choose that option to benefit the district. The district has autonomous discretion on what is done with those funds.
- iii. An Open qualifier may count for a Youth or Senior qualifier (example: 2 Youth qualifiers plus 1 Open qualifier = qualified for Youth).
 - 1. Note: A Youth qualifier or a Senior qualifier does not count as an Open qualifier
- d. Horse changes must be received in the show office prior to your competition run.
- e. In the event of a tie for a Finals title in any Division (1st Place only in any D), tiebreaker will occur using the following protocol:
 - i. The contestant with the fastest time of the Finals will be deemed champion
 - ii. Winning monies related to a tie will be split 50/50 or evenly in the case of more than two individuals in a tie.

Section G: Penalties and/or Disqualifications

1. NWBHA membership and participation in NWBHA events is a privilege, not a right. Behavior which is damaging to the Association, or its membership will not be tolerated. Violation of any of the following provisions may subject a member to disqualification from NWBHA events, being denied entry to NWBHA events, loss of points, or suspension from the Association.
2. Any act in connection with an NWBHA sanctioned show or other NWBHA business in violation of this section by a member of the family of an NWBHA member may be deemed to have been committed by the NWBHA member and subject him or her to penalties.
3. Any act deemed prejudicial to the best interests of NWBHA may result in the suspension of a member, including but not limited to the following.
 - a. Using abusive or intemperate language or attempting to threaten, bribe, influence or harass any contestant, show official or NWBHA official. Also, any remarks made with the intent to cast aspersions on the character or integrity of an NWBHA official or show official.
 - b. Moving or attempting to move markers at any time.
 - c. Use of electronic and/or remotely controlled devices to alter the outcome of a run.
 - d. Abuse of a horse in any way.
 - e. Competing while impaired and under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
 - f. Misidentifying a horse in any NWBHA class will disqualify a contestant.
 - g. Other conduct that is not in the best interest of NWBHA or its members.
 - h. Failure to make good on a returned check to NWBHA or to any NWBHA sanctioned event, or to any other association which has a cooperative agreement with NWBHA on returned checks
4. Race producer and/or NWBHA Directors at their sole discretion shall have the authority to disqualify or deny entry to any horse they deem dangerous to the rider, or to other individuals, animals, or property.
5. A member who has been suspended, disqualified, or denied points under this section may appeal to an appeals committee of NWBHA directors. The date, time, and location of such

meeting will be determined by the Regional or Area Director. The decisions of such appeals committee shall be final and binding on all parties.

Section H. Dress Code

1. To enhance the image of our sport, NWBHA encourages and promotes appropriate western attire throughout all NWBHA sanctioned events. This includes a long-sleeved Western full button, snapped or zipped shirt with collar, and a western cowboy hat or helmet. Shirt sleeves must be rolled down and buttoned or snapped. Shirt tails must be tucked in. Jackets or coverings may be worn; however, western attire must exist regardless of cover.
2. Dress code is at the producer's discretion and will be communicated in promotional material. This dress code will be enforced at Finals.
3. Anyone in any practice pen, holding area, or competition area must wear closed-toed shoes or boots.

Section I. Protests & Complaints

1. Persons who believe a rule violation or infraction has occurred at an NWBHA event, may file a written protest with NWBHA via email at info@nwbha.org. The written protest must be accompanied by a \$50 protest fee. The protest must be made within 30 days of the incident which is being protested. If the protest proves to be valid, the \$50 protest fee will be returned to the person filing the protest. If the protest proves to be invalid, the protest fee will be returned to the district where the protest was filed to be used for district year end awards. In certain cases, determined by the Regional Directors, NWBHA may reserve the right to return the \$50 protest fee even if the protest proves to be invalid. This is the ONLY manner in which a protest or complaint will be accepted.

NOTE: This rule does not prevent Directors and Producers from correcting obvious problems brought to their attention, without the submission of a written protest fee. Any situation not covered under these rules shall be decided by an NWBHA official.